

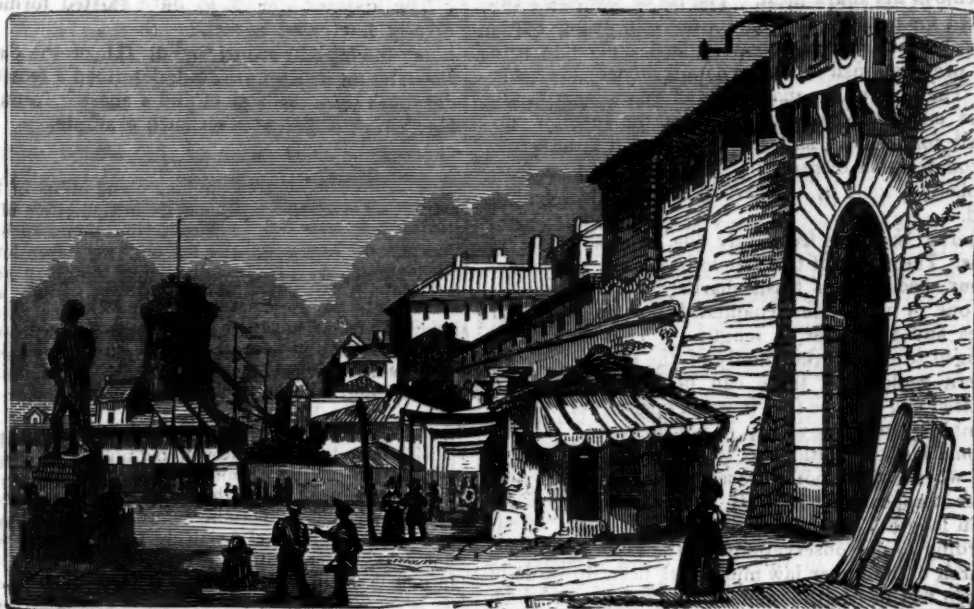
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LEGHORN.



VIEW OF LEGHORN.

LEGHORN is the name given in England to an Italian sea-port which ought to be called *Livorno*. It is situated in the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, about fourteen miles from Pisa, and forty-five from Florence. A low plain extends from the southern bank of the river Arno to the hills of Montenero, and in the midst of this plain stands Leghorn. The slope of the hills is covered with the country houses and gardens of the merchants of Leghorn, where a beautiful and extensive view of the sea is obtained.

The town is about two miles in circumference: and there are two other suburbs, one beyond the north gate of the town, and the other, called Borgo Cappuccini, to the south; these two suburbs have of late years greatly increased in size. There is a tolerably large harbour to the town, but it is not sufficiently deep for large vessels; they therefore anchor without the harbour, where the anchorage is safe and good; while smaller vessels can anchor in the harbour.

The western district, called La Nova Venezia, is intersected with canals, by which the goods are carried in boats from the shipping in the harbour, and landed before the warehouses of the merchants. It has been said, that of all the towns in the Mediterranean, Leghorn perhaps most resembles an English town; the inhabitants are, by long intercourse, familiar with the English, and well-disposed towards them. The English burying-ground, situated on the ramparts, is adorned with numerous marble monuments,—among others that of Smollett, who died here.

Leghorn is a well-built town, with streets carefully paved, but rendered dark by the great height of the houses. There are not any superb private palaces here, as in the other towns of Italy. The only wide street is the *Strada Ferdinanda*, running north and south,

and leading from Pisa to the port: in the middle of the town it expands into an open square or market-place, called the *Piazza d'Armi*. The north-western quarter of the town, where the ground is remarkably low, is called *Little Venice*, being intersected by canals instead of streets; the chief magazines and warehouses are situated in this division. The outer haven, which is properly the harbour, is formed by a mole six hundred paces in length, which breaks the force of the waves, and even in some measure of the winds. This mole being well-paved, and commanding an agreeable view along the Tuscan coast, is the favourite promenade.

Leghorn is, principally, a place of trade, and wants those attractions which art and refinement have bestowed on the other towns of Italy. The public edifices are numerous and commodious, but not splendid. The archducal palace, the cathedral, and seven parish churches, besides those belonging to convents, and the numerous hospitals, are all plain buildings without any peculiar claim to the traveller's attention. There are also English, Armenian, Greek, and Lutheran churches here, besides a magnificent synagogue, and a Jami, or Turkish mosque. In the *Darsena*, is a colossal statue of the Grand Duke Ferdinand the First, by Francanella, on a handsome pedestal, at the four corners of which are bronze figures of slaves with their hands tied behind their backs; this pedestal was designed by Pietro Tacca. The public library is very insignificant, the only gallery of paintings in the town is that which belongs to the Genoese merchant, Lambruschini. The private library of Poggiali is celebrated.

The town is exposed to sea-winds, which frequently blow with extreme violence, raising the sea along the

coast so as to make the dikes and canals overflow. They generally bring with them from the sea a thick mist, which does great injury to marbles and pictures. The same winds carry the clouds inland with great impetuosity, so that the first falls of rain take place over the hills of Pisa: hence, notwithstanding the trifling distance between Pisa and Leghorn, the quantity of rain that falls at the latter place is much less than at the former. The climate is healthy; the surrounding plain is one continued garden; and during the heats of summer the inhabitants of the villages experience no inconvenience from exposure to the night air. The soil produces grain, garden vegetables, and fruits, in abundance; the last being considered the best in all Tuscany. The wines of the surrounding district have the peculiar flavour which characterizes the vintages of the sea-shore. The growth of the cypress is checked by the sea-winds, and most of the trees are stripped of their leaves, and inclined towards the mountains by the violence of the gales. The wells of Leghorn are said to have better water than those of Pisa, yet many of them are brackish, and almost all rise and fall with the tide. At a depth of from one to twenty feet beneath the surface of the soil in the surrounding plain, are found strata of a rock composed wholly of sea-shells, more or less in a state of comminution. These strata extend to the sea-shore, and are in some places covered by the sea. The fossil-shells do not belong to the species which at present inhabit the adjoining seas. In the year 1714 the workmen employed in making a sewer from the New Hospital of Leghorn to that of St. James, found a tree ten or twelve feet long, hollowed within, and apparently intended for a pump, completely imbedded in this rock; cones of pines, the horns, teeth, and bones, of various animals were found at the same time: among other organic remains imbedded in this rock, are those of the deer and elephant.

The straw hats and bonnets exported from Leghorn form such an important part of the labours of the neighbouring peasantry, that it will be interesting briefly to notice the mode of proceeding; for the details of which we are indebted to Mr. Macculloch.

About thirty thousand persons are supposed to be engaged in the manufacture. The description of straw used, which is cultivated solely for the purposes of the manufacture, and not for the grain, is a variety of bearded wheat, which seems to differ in no respect from the spring-wheat grown in many parts of England. After undergoing a certain preparatory process, the upper part of the stems, (being first sorted as to colour and thickness) are formed into a plait of generally thirteen straws, which is afterwards knitted together at the edges into a circular shape called a *flat*, or hat. The fineness of the flats is determined by the number of rows of plait which compose them, (counting from the bottom of the crown to the edge of the brim,) and their relative fineness ranges from about No. 20 to 60, being the rows contained in the breadth of the brim, which is generally eight inches. They are afterwards assorted into first, second, and third qualities, which are determined by the colour and texture; the most faultless being denominated the first, while the most defective is described as the third quality. These qualities are much influenced by the season of the year, in which the straw is plaited. Spring is the most favourable, not only for plaiting, but for bleaching and finishing. The dust and perspiration in summer, and the benumbed fingers of the workwomen in winter, when they are compelled to keep within their smoky huts, plaiting the cold and wet straw, are equally injurious to the colour of the hats, which no bleaching

can improve. The flats are afterwards made up in cases of ten or twenty dozen, assorted in progressive numbers or qualities, and the price of the middle or average number governs the whole. The *Brozzi* flats bear the highest repute, and the *Signa* are considered secondary; these names are given to the flats from the districts where they are plaited. The demand for these hats is chiefly from England, France, Germany, and America, but the kinds mostly required are the lower number; the very finest hats being considered too expensive by the generality of buyers.

The demand for Leghorn hats in England has greatly fluctuated according to the skill with which home-made plaits are executed. During the war, the importation of Leghorns being interrupted, great endeavours were made to improve English straw-plaiting, which endeavours were to a considerable extent successful. The number of foreign straw hats imported varies from one to three hundred thousand annually.

We may now briefly notice the chief points in the history of Leghorn. In the eleventh century it was only known as a parish or village belonging Pisa, and after being ravaged by wars in which its more powerful neighbours were the principal actors, it was sold to the Genoese for 26,000 ducats. From them it was purchased by the Florentines, for the increased price of 100,000 ducats. The new possessors improved the place by erecting walls and docks; and partly from this circumstance, partly by the gradual filling up of the harbour of Pisa with mud, Leghorn gradually attained precedence, as a port, of the last named town.

The family of the Medici, in the sixteenth century, did much for the improvement of Leghorn. They built a mole and a lighthouse, and made it the station of the galleys of the military order of St. Stefano, whose avocation, like that of St. John of Jerusalem, was to make war against the Mohammedans: they granted to all new settlers at Leghorn privileges and immunities from taxes, and security from pursuit on account of debts contracted or penalties incurred in other countries:—they raised regular fortifications round the town, excavated a navigable canal from the sea to the Arno, raised fortifications, built warehouses, a fortress, a lazaretto; and finally, invited foreign merchants, whether Greeks, Armenians, Turks, Jews, or Moors, to come and settle there without fear of molestation on account of their religion. This line of conduct drew many persons to Leghorn, who were the means of increasing the importance of the town.

Leghorn has continued to form part of the Florentine state, since called Tuscany, and has flourished under the judicious rule of the Grand Dukes. It escaped the troubles consequent on the French revolution pretty well; but when Bonaparte seized Tuscany in 1806, Leghorn suffered severely: the merchants' establishments were shut up, and ships seldom entered the harbour, but when, in 1814, a change was brought about in the state of Europe, Leghorn was placed upon her old footing, and has gradually regained her wealth and influence. One of those emblems of modern times, a railroad, has been commenced between Leghorn and Florence, which will be fifty miles long, and for which about a million sterling has been subscribed. An aqueduct has also been constructed.

Leghorn is the principal port from whence the products of central Italy are exported and the produce of other countries imported. The exports are principally silk, straw hats, oil, iron, paper, potash, alabaster, coarse woollen cloths, coral (which is gathered on the coast of Sardinia, and manufactured into trip-

kets at Leghorn) anchovies, and other articles: the value of the straw hats exported is said to be about four millions francs annually, and that of silk not much less. The principal imports are, English cotton goods, hardware, French woollen, corn from the Baltic, salt fish, and colonial articles. About six hundred vessels enter the port annually, besides two thousand coasters from the adjoining ports. The population amounts to about seventy-five thousand.

THE TEAZLE.

THE common teasle (*Dipsacus fullonum*) belongs to the fourth class and first order of Linnæus, and gives a title to an order in the natural system, namely, *Dipsacæ*. The plants of this order are, with the exception of the teasle, few and unimportant; though some of the species are admitted into our flower gardens, on account of their handsome blossoms: such are the scabiouses, of which the purple and starry kinds are common hardy annuals.

The value and importance of the teasle arise from the use which is made of its prickly flower-heads in our woollen manufacture, where it appears indeed to be absolutely indispensable, and not to be rivalled by any of the ingenious inventions which have been offered from time to time as a substitute for its use. Without any other preparation than that of a careful drying in the sun, the heads of this plant are better fitted than any other known material for raising the nap on cloth, removing knots and unevenness, without injury to its texture, and bringing it to a fit state to receive the subsequent operations of shearing and pressing, which, combined with the *teazling*, give to it the beautiful equality of surface we so much admire.

The head of the teasle is composed of a great number of flowers, united together in a conical form, but separated from each other by a long chaffy substance, at the end of which is a fine *hook*, the part so valuable to the manufacturer. These hooks, while they are strong enough to overcome a slight impediment in their passage over the cloth, are yet sufficiently yielding to give way and break when they become fixed in a knot which they cannot disentangle: hence their superiority over metallic substances, which, instead of yielding, must tear or deface the material on which they are employed, and thus greatly overbalance any advantage which might result from their more imperishable nature. The quantity of teazles required in the clothing districts is immense, while the supply is so precarious as to make them sometimes excessively dear. It is on this account that so many attempts have been made to supersede their use, and to introduce metallic teazles, of an unchangeable nature, possessing the valuable qualities which are found in the vegetable; but, as we have already stated, these attempts have, in a great measure, failed, or, at least, their results have not been sufficiently satisfactory to cause the common teasle to be discarded from the most eminent manufactories.

In teasling by hand, a number of the prickly heads of the plant are arranged in a small wooden frame, having crossed handles eight or ten inches long; these frames have then somewhat the appearance of curry-combs, and are used by two men, who scrub the face of the cloth as it hangs in a vertical position from two horizontal rails, made fast to the ceiling of the workshop. The cloth is first wetted, and worked with the teazles in the direction of the warp, and then in that of the weft; so that the fibres are effectually raised, and the cloth is prepared for the process of shearing. The teasle-heads soon become clogged, or filled with

flocks of wool; and it is then necessary to take them out of the frame, and deliver them over to children, whose employ it is to clear them from this incumbrance, by picking out the flocks with a steel comb. There is also another cause for their being occasionally removed from the frame. The moisture, which they receive from the damp cloth, weakens their points, and renders them inefficient in their work until they have been dried afresh, and restored to their former state. The dressing of a piece of cloth consumes from fifteen hundred to two thousand teasle heads; and this large consumption makes the cultivation of these plants in clothing districts occasionally a source of considerable profit. We say, *occasionally*, for the teasle crop is by no means to be depended on. The seasons have a more than ordinary influence upon it; a continuation of damp weather being ruinous to the head of the plant, which retains and absorbs moisture till it is in a state of decay, and utterly unfitted for the use of the manufacturer. At such times, and especially if the stock on hand be small, the price of teazles becomes very high, and sometimes arrives at upwards of twenty pounds the pack. By a *pack*, we mean a collection of nine thousand large, or ten thousand small heads; the small or middling-sized heads being, however, rather preferable to the others, for the use to which they are applied. The average price of a pack is considered to be from five to seven pounds.

In large manufactories teasling is not performed by hand, but by means of a machine called a *gig-mill*, which originally consisted, and does still consist in most places, of a large cylinder, bristled all over with the teasle heads, and made to revolve rapidly while the cloth is drawn over it in different directions. The introduction of these mills into France in 1802, by an English mechanist, of the name of Douglas, has been the means of generally superseding the practice of teasling by hand in that country.

The cultivated teasle is a biennial plant, and the method of sowing it is in drills on strong land, where it is thinned by the hoe, and kept clear from weeds in the first year: in the second, it is also to the interest of the cultivator that it should be kept clean, (though the same attention is not generally paid to hoeing as during the first season;) and when the heads are ripe, they are cut, and dried for sale. There is some difficulty in drying teazles, on account of the care which is required to keep the heads in a proper state, and to save the spines from injury or destruction: indeed, the cultivation of this plant is attended with so much care and trouble, that manufacturers are seldom found to grow them for their own use; neither do we find them a favourite article of speculation with persons who have employment for their time in other ways, and whose farms or other business will not allow of a close attention to the teasle crops in particular. This plant is said to impoverish the soil on which it is raised; but some of those who have given attention to the subject, affirm that the accumulation of weeds which is allowed to take place in many instances during the second year, deteriorates the soil, and is likely to prove more injurious than the cultivation of the plant itself.

The author of the *Journal of a Naturalist* mentions it as probable, that the teasle is not a native of this country, but was originally introduced by some of the numerous foreign artisans, who have taken refuge in England. As to the time when it began to be cultivated here, he has the following remarks:—"The manufactory of cloth was certainly carried on in England during the reign of Richard I.—perhaps in his father's reign; but it was probably not until after the

tenth of Edward III. that the teazle was cultivated to any extent with us; for, about that time, the exportation of English wool was prohibited, and the wearing of foreign cloth opposed by government. Flemish artisans were encouraged to settle in this country, and carry on their trade with every liberty and protection. A regular mart was established, and the tuckers or woollen weavers became an incorporated body; particular towns began to furnish peculiar colours—Kendal its green, Coventry its blue, Bristol its red, &c.; and from this period, I think we may date the cultivation of the teazle in England." The wild teazle (*Dipsacus sylvestris*), of which the clothiers' teazle is considered by some botanists to be merely a variety, is common in our hedges, and well deserving of attention. The head of the plant is exceedingly beautiful, bearing an abundance of small lilac blossoms, each in its separate sheath or cell; and the leaves, stalk, and calyx also are very beautifully formed. The axils of the leaves usually contain a quantity of limpid water, which is sometimes very acceptable to travellers.

THE SHARK. II.

REQUIN is the term by which the white shark is known to the French. The derivation of this term is somewhat fanciful. A French writer thus defines the term:—

The strength and arrangement of the teeth of this animal, the rapidity of its movements, its frequent appearance in the midst of tempests, and the phosphoric light with which it then shines, lead us to an explanation of its name, which is derived from the word *requiem*, so commonly used to describe death and endless repose. Terrible even when subdued and loaded with chains, struggling with violence in the midst of its bonds, still powerful though bathed in its own blood, and able with a single blow of its tail, to scatter destruction around, even at the point of death! Such is the Requin.

We promised, in our last article, to illustrate the formidable powers of the white shark, by relating a fearful struggle between this animal and a human being. The narration we are about to give appears now for the first time in English.

In the year 1831, an American ship, named the *Olympus*, anchored off the Island of Bourbon, in the Indian Ocean. Night was coming on, and a gentle gale from the offing scarcely swelled the little waves which rolled on calmly, and broke upon the adjacent shore. Part of the sailors had obtained permission from their officers to go on shore and refresh themselves after the fatigues of the day.

The quarter-master was standing on deck, contemplating the scene of tranquillity around him: the blue waters seemed to invite him to a refreshing bath, and he was soon undressed; and, mounting on the barricade, plunged into the sea; he was an excellent swimmer, and was soon a considerable distance from the ship.

The cook of the ship, a negro, had made himself a seat in the shrouds, and sat watching the skilful manœuvres of the quarter-master; when, by chance directing his eyes to the offing, he thought he perceived the black fin of a shark swimming near the surface of the water. The large size of this fin having at first made him think it was only a plank of wood floating on the water, he paid little attention to it; but a more attentive examination convinced him that one of those frightful monsters of the deep was approaching. A cold shudder agitated all his limbs, and his first impulse was to cry out to the quarter-master to come on board instantly; but the fear of suddenly alarming the swimmer, paralysed his voice. He

thought that, if the quarter-master were suddenly warned of his danger, fear might deprive him of the means of escape; the black acted with more prudence: he warned several sailors who were on board, of the danger; they quickly launched a little canoe, which was suspended from the ship's side to assist in several external repairs required by the ship, and seizing the first oars they could lay hands on, they rowed as rapidly as possible towards the spot at which they had just seen the quarter-master dive.

The vibration produced in the water by the motions of the swimmer, and by the rowing of the canoe, had probably excited the animal's attention: it was seen in the distance, advancing swiftly towards them; its dorsal fin tracing on the sea a furrow of white foam. But the diver did not reappear: delighting in his exercise, and perhaps encouraging that little vanity which alloys our nature, to do his best before the little group of spectators who, as he thought, were watching him from the deck, he gambolled in the waters and under them, ignorant of the rapid approach of the terrific monster, and ignorant also of the anxiety of the little band of friends who were advancing spontaneously to share his peril. Anxiously did the sailors in the canoe watch the approach of the shark, as anxiously did they watch for the termination of the dive of their quarter-master; they saw him nowhere, and hope began to depart. At length, the head of the sailor was seen in the hollow between two waves, and a few yards off appeared the grayish mass of the monstrous shark: the transparent waters enabled them to see that it was indeed a monster; they foresaw with anguish the struggle that must soon be commenced between themselves and this formidable enemy: a frightful contest in which the stake was a man, and that man their comrade and friend.

"Take care, Williams," exclaimed one of the sailors to the master, who, quite astonished on reappearing at the surface of the water, at seeing a canoe near him, did not dare interrogate his comrades; "take care, Williams, sharks have been seen from the rigging—it is not safe to bathe any longer;—be quick, get into the boat." The sailor who spoke this was grasping the handle of a boat-hook, the only offensive weapon they had to oppose to the imminent danger to which the master was at this moment exposed. "Quick! quick to the boat!" exclaimed the others in accents of terror, which would have sufficiently warned the master of danger, had the tumult of the waters caused by the swimming monster failed to do so.

The unhappy master darted towards the canoe, and the rowers exerted their utmost efforts to join him. Those sailors who were not furnished with oars, extended their arms towards him; every one's heart palpitated between hope and fear; every one measured with a scared eye, the distance which separated the monster from its prey. The negro threw out a rope which chanced to be in the boat; but fear had already so far overcome the poor swimmer, that his efforts were no longer well directed, and he wasted his strength in vain attempts to escape. His arms were held out to his comrades, but they could not yet reach him; the shark was as near to him as he was to the canoe; stretching forwards at the risk of falling into the water, two sailors held to him their friendly hands. The shark made a violent movement, darted out of the water, turned half round and opened its enormous mouth, "armed with threefold fate;"—a wonderful chance saved the master literally from the "jaws of death."

The sailor who was standing at the head of the boat armed with the boat-hook, although well per-



ENCOUNTER WITH A SHARK.

suaded of the insufficiency of his weapon, struck at the monster, the moment its head quitted the water to seize its prey. The first blow, rapid as an arrow, only cut through the oily skin of the shark; but the second blow, as rapid as the first, was more successful; it went into the mouth of the animal, and there inflicted a terrible wound, the pain of which made the shark quit its prey; it fell into the water, turned upon its back, and snapped upon the weapon, which had fortunately lodged in its mouth. Its fury was manifested by powerful convulsions; it turned upon the little canoe, struck it a violent blow with its tail, and staved it;—but the quarter-master was saved.

The head of the canoe now fell off, and the brave little band of sailors took refuge in the stern; but the water was gaining upon them, and the danger from which the quarter-master had just been so providentially saved, now seemed to threaten the whole of them, for the enraged shark now beat the sea with its tail and pectoral fins, with a fury which the pain of its wound doubled. The boat-hook had broken between its teeth, but the iron had spiked the animal's thick tongue to its palate. It may well be imagined that the poor sailors were terrified at the animal's fury: they were crowded in too great number upon the wreck of a miserable little craft, more than half a mile from the ship, that haven of refuge to which their longing eyes were in vain directed. But not altogether in vain, for help awaited them from another quarter. A schooner anchored near the land, near to which the American sailors had passed in going out to the assistance of their comrade, sent out its long-boat to the wreck of the canoe, which, in a few minutes, must have sunk. The shark, whose voracious instinct was aroused by the presence of human beings, did not abandon the spot, but bounded furiously, excited apparently by the pain of its wound, and by the vicinity of its prey, which had just escaped from it, and was still so near. But the sailors on the wreck, (nine in number,) were soon on board the long-boat of the schooner, and soon after in a condition of safety. The shark continued for a long time to agitate the waters of the roadstead. The story of

the quarter-master's escape has been preserved on the coast, and, like a local tradition, is repeated from mouth to mouth, thereby preventing every sailor from bathing in the calm blue waters which are haunted by the requin.

ROTTERDAM IN WINTER.

ROTTERDAM presents a curious and entertaining scene in frosty weather. The large windows made of the clearest glass, and kept bright by the constant care of the housewives, sparkle in the sun with more than usual lustre; the fine trees planted along the sides of the streets, are feathered with congealed snow; innumerable pleasure-boats and merchant ships lie wedged together in the canals, their rigging, masts, and pendants candied over in the same manner as the branches of the trees; and multitudes of men, women, and children, gliding in their sledges with incredible swiftness and dexterity along the streets and canals, render the whole prospect lively and amusing. But indeed throughout Holland, in winter, the whole country wears the appearance of a fair. The canals from one town to another, are often frozen over for three months together and form a solid floor of ice. The country-people skate to market with milk and vegetables. Sometimes a party of twenty or thirty may be seen, going together, young women as well as men, holding each other by the hand, and gliding away with surprising swiftness. Booths are built upon the ice, with large fires in them; horses run races rough-shod, that is, their shoes are turned up to prevent their falling; every kind of sport is to be seen on the frozen canals. Sledges drawn by the hand, others by horses, and all gaily decorated, and filled with ladies and children covered with warm furs, fly from one end of the streets to another. These sledges have no wheels, but move on an iron rounded at the ends.

The ladies of all the northern countries are extremely fond of riding in traineaux in the winter evenings. These carriages, prettily carved, painted and gilt, are made in the shape of lions, swans, dolphins, peacocks, or any other device, and are fixed on the sledge. The lady on these occasions is gaily dressed in velvet, sables, lace and jewels, and her head is defended from the cold by a velvet cap turned up with fur; the horse, too, is decorated with feathers and bells and the horns of a stag are fixed on his head. Several pages on horseback, with flambeaux, attend the carriage, to display the equipage and prevent mischief, as they often drive at full speed through the streets in the darkest nights; but it is by moonlight that all this finery contrasted with the snow, makes the most beautiful appearance.

THE OSSETES OF THE CAUCASUS.

DESCENDANTS OF JAPHETH—REMAINS OF CHRISTIANITY AMONG THEM—THEIR CRIMINAL CODE—CUSTOMS—CHARACTER, &c.

THE Ossetes are one of the most remarkable tribes which inhabit the vicinity of the Caucasus. The line of country on which they are settled, comprehends the valleys and glens on both sides of the lofty range of mountains which runs from the Elborus to the Kasibeg, or Mount of the Cross; and the most extensive of those valleys are those of the Upper Terek, Fiag, Aridon, and Urik. Their southern neighbours are the people of Grusia, their western the Mingrelians, and their northern and eastern the Tsherkeses, or Circassians.

The only two travellers of note who have given us any information on the subject of the Ossetes, are, Klaproth, who passed through the country in haste, and could not, therefore, speak from much personal observation; and M. Sjögren, of the Imperial Academy of St. Petersburg, whose report to that body has reference chiefly to the language of the people. What follows has been collected by M. Gregorieffshsky, a civilian in the Russian service, during his sojourn among the Ossetes, for the purpose of preparing an accurate survey of that part of the country. Having rendered some of their principal chiefs very essential services, he was received by the natives with open arms; their great men met him on the frontier, and, as travelling in that quarter is none of the safest, escorted him to whatever point he wished to move.

The Ossetes are a strictly primitive race, bearing in no one respect the slightest affinity with any of their neighbours, whether Grusinians, Circassians, Lesghis, or Mingrelians. Mr. G. speaks of them as having kept themselves from all intermixture whatever with any other people, and as being a pure, aboriginal race of men, descendants in a direct line from one of the sons of Japheth, who took his course westwards; and thence their name of Ossi. Their language, which has been preserved uncontaminated among them to the present day, is one of the oldest tongues known, and contains radicals for every European language, with the solitary exception of the Finnish. They pronounce their words slowly, like the Germans; in fact, both in manner and in tone, they come so close to the German, that the writer conceives they would understand German if it were spoken to them. In another respect, too, they resemble the Germans, for they have light hair and blue eyes; the tribes of Grusia, on the contrary, having dark eyes and black hair. During the first seven hundred years of the Christian era, when united under one head, the dominion of the Ossetes comprehended the greater part of the territory about the Caucasus, and extended to the banks of the Don and Volga. At the present day, the Chazars, to whom they are tributary, are confined to their native mountains, and all their state economy is dwindled down into semi-barbarism; nay, Christianity itself, which had once struck deep root into their character and institutions, has altogether withered and faded away. The reader may appreciate the justness of this report from what follows. They are without any sort of priesthood, or of holy men, or of hermits, such as are met with among the other nations of the Caucasus; neither have they any churches or other places of worship; nor do they celebrate any religious service on the Sunday. Yet there are spots on which stand the ruins of old churches, for which they have preserved a vestige of veneration. Some are the objects of an inferior degree of esteem, so that when they pass by them they

merely take off their caps; with regard to the remainder, they dismount from their horses, and pass by them on foot. When they were asked to give a reason for this custom, they were unable to account for it in any other way, than that they considered it right to do so, and had been taught to observe it by their parents. They honour the seventh day by going bareheaded, and are extremely rigid on this point. Whether it rains or snows, or whether at home or on a journey, they never cover their heads on this day; and there is otherwise no difference whatever between the seventh and any other day in the week. In point of fact, they begin the custom of going bareheaded with the Saturday evening, which they call "Shabate," and never put on their caps again until Monday morning. They have no religious book of any description, nor is the sign of the cross known among them: there is no such symbol to be found, either within-doors or in the open air; and they are equally unacquainted with the symbols of idol-worship. And yet they observe some religious festivals; for instance, that of St. Elias, which falls on the 20th of July, according to the Greek style; and Christmas-tide. The observance of these days is, however, confined to the preparing of certain dishes, which they partake of freely, setting apart a portion of them in an uninhabited room, in order that the "spirit of the house" may have his meal. It grieves them to the heart when he does not touch it; while, on the other hand, they are delighted when they find any part of the dishes has disappeared. The quintessence of their religion is comprised in a very remarkable prayer put up before their festive repast on those holidays. The oldest individual present places himself by the side of the vessel in which the beef is boiling, and taking a piece of meat and a large bone out of it, which he holds in either hand, and turning his face to the south, pronounces the prayer. It is noticeable, that this aspiration contains no allusion to the Holy Trinity; that, after the Almighty has been invoked, appeal is next made to Saint George, then to the Mother of God, afterwards to the Archangels; next, by sudden ejaculation, to the prophet Elias; and, at the very conclusion, to Christ; and lastly, that their invocations for mercy and pity are also addressed to the mountain-tops, on which they believe the saints to have their abiding place, as well as to the churches on the heights. I here subjoin the prayer itself, in literal translation, from the Ossetic, which I have placed in juxta-position with it.

| | |
|--|---|
| O God, we pray thee to pour out thy grace upon us: have mercy upon us! | Chitshaw tabudon, chitshawnachisho fod da chorsah nen rad. |
| Blessed St. George, we pray thee, Lelp us, and have mercy upon us! | Wash Kirgi chitshonda fod, da chorsach nen rad. |
| O Mother of God, we pray thee, have mercy upon us! | Deda Chitisa tabudon da chorsach, &c. |
| O Elias, we pray thee, have mercy upon us! | Ilia tabudon, chitshonda fod da, &c. |
| Ye churches on the heights, have mercy upon us! | Cochodshuar da chorsach, &c. |
| O St. George Nara*, have mercy upon us! | Narnash Kirgi tabudon da chorsach, &c. |
| Ye Mountains on high, and all, O ye Apostles and Angels, who abide upon them: we hail you and pray unto you! O help and have mercy upon those who hail and seek ye! | Brussabseli tshisadta tshidawgita bidiss udonima chitshonde fod, da chorsach nen rad tabudawen. |
| Ye Grusinian Churches, we pray ye, have mercy upon us; and may all the nations which dwell around you, have mercy upon us! O Christ, we pray thee, have mercy upon us! | Kuwenniki agwriass Monachisho fod Gurahistami, tshi Djworta ist chitshonde fod chorsachne rad tut u adami chorsachne rad tut. |
| God of all goodness, help us according unto thy righteousness! | Rostmehenech chitshan namitane nen srestmake tabudon. |

* Nara, a defile in which there once stood a church dedicated to St. George.

† This invocation clearly designates the quarter whence the canon version of the Ossetes proceeded.

Among some communities, with whom the Russians were in favour, and with a view to conciliate their representative, the following addition was made to the prayer:—"Ruskane Djwarten tabudon, Russkane chorsachne radhut christian chtsho fod tabudon, d. c. n. r." which implies, "O ye Russian churches, we pray that ye would obtain grace for us in the eyes of the Christian, Russian Emperor."

Though there is as little of social organization among this people as there are traces of anything like a regular system in religious matters, the head of each family is a man of some consequence: and as the head of the most numerous clanship is relatively highest in estimation, every district and valley has one or two elders who bear superior sway, though not to be compared with the influence or authority which the Arab sheik enjoys. The spirit of democracy, or rather a state of savage recklessness, is far more the characteristic of Ossetian society. In every house the head of the family has a seat of honour reserved for him, consisting of a large chair, having a back and arms, and it devolves upon him to adjudge in all cases of dispute that may arise in the district. On these occasions, each party chooses three heads of families, who are not near of kin to them, as judges; and the six arbitrators hold their meeting in a wood, or upon a mountain, or elsewhere, as the case may be, weigh the various circumstances laid before them, and give their award, either as the circumstances may appear to dictate, or in conformity with prescribed usage. The majority of the questions in dispute are connected with offences against the person, for which there are certain established penalties. A value is set not only upon every individual, but upon every member of his body: this value is assigned in the only coin current among them; to wit, oxen and cows,—a practice analogous with that prevalent among barbarous nations in former ages. The murder of the head of a large family is taxed at eighteen times eighteen oxen: each ox being of the value of about five silver rubles, or eighteen shillings; but the slaying of an inferior head of a family is diminished to nine times nine oxen. The penalty progressively diminishes until it reaches its minimum of eighteen oxen, which is the value of an ordinary male. I forgot to ask at what rate the value of a female is fixed. Every penalty is, however, subject to modifications according to circumstances: in some cases it is raised, but in others decreased. If the judges cannot agree upon their award, either fresh judges are selected, or open war between the parties is declared: but if they agree, they keep the sentence secret, and only disclose it gradually. For instance, they begin by announcing to the offender, that he has so many oxen to deliver to the injured family, and that in due time, he will be made acquainted with the other terms of his sentence. These are kept religiously concealed until the ensuing year, when they direct him to make over a further portion of his herd to the injured party. And a year after this, they give him notice in such terms as these: "Now you have so many sheep to pay, and the rest of the sentence will be duly made known to you." He must wait till the fourth year revolves, when the last instalment of his sentence is announced to him; and then the whole affair is brought to a close, and both parties condemned to bury all in perpetual silence. By this process, the injured family are kept from giving the rein to the first burst of their resentment, which cools down, and is at last fully appeased by the restitution made to them; while the offender feels the penalty modified by not having to pay it at, perhaps, a costly sacrifice, in the first instance. If either party refuse

to abide by the sentence, he must prepare to encounter the hostility of the judges as well as of the hostages he has given, for each party is obliged to find three individuals as a warranty for his abiding by the award.

The worst class of the Ossetes is the "Keshelzi," a small tribe, who inhabit the more elevated part of the mountains on the confines of Grusia and Iremethia. They are almost constantly engaged in marauding parties, or, if quiet for a moment, in making preparation for a fresh one. For the purpose of collecting a force on these occasions, they send messengers into the valleys and villages, acquaint the invited with their plan, the names of the leaders, &c., and seduce the young men to enlist. Mingrelia, Grusia, and the adjacent countries, suffer much from their inroads.

An essential difference exists between the characters of the Ossetes who inhabit the wooded and fertile valleys, and those who are settled in the bleak and barren highlands. Their mode of life, too, is altogether dissimilar. The houses in the lowlands are built of wood, but among the mountains, of stone: the former have but a single floor, the latter invariably three, raised as high as a watch-tower. The ground-floor of these towers hold the cattle; the middle floor, where the family abide, is reached by a ladder, which is removed at night. A gallery frequently runs round this floor, and the uppermost is the receptacle for their chattels and provisions. The houses in the valleys are usually collected into groups of from twenty to thirty; on higher ground they dwindle down to two or three; and on the highest, the dwellings become isolated fastnesses. But hospitality is a predominant virtue in all quarters, so much so, indeed, that wherever Gregorieffshsky's escort had acquaintances, a whole house, with all belonging to it, was placed at his disposal. He was always preceded by a messenger, and on approaching any spot, was met by some of the inhabitants, who brought him an ox as a present, and greeted him by saying, "This ox is thine, and we hope, will afford you a relishing meal." "Why, my good people," he would reply, "bring me more than I know what to do with? A fowl and some eggs would suit me far better." To this they would laconically rejoin, "We intend paying you a visit, and taking our commons with you." The ox was then slain by the elder of the place, and boiled in large kettles in the court of the house. The Ossetes never roast, but invariably boil, their meat. Their mode at meals is singular: the meat is divided among the parties present, according to their rank, the distinction which the family enjoys, or its comparative numbers. This partition is never made without much contention. A man will frequently allege that he has not as much as the size of his household entitles him to receive; and another insists he is entitled to the shins. In the midst of the din, workmen and paupers are heard fuming and fretting their lothness to be put off with the intestines. And then—the savage greediness with which all is devoured! But, no wonder; it may be their fate to fast three or four days afterwards. They never kill game, in order that their powder and lead may be reserved for their next broil with some neighbour.

In the valleys nearest their border, they drink Grusian wine, but in the interior, nothing but brandy, or a kind of beer made from barley. They have distinct vessels for each separate beverage: a small wooden bottle, with a long neck and small aperture, or the hollow end of an ox's horn, for brandy, and an enormously large sheep or bullock's horn, for beer and water; many of them are above a yard long: and they pride themselves upon being able to empty

it at one draught. All this is the very Germans of Tacitus over again.

They are excellent marksmen, and every one of them is armed in the same fashion. A curved or straight sword hangs in front, but on one side, like the Turkish mode of wearing it. A musket and two pistols are slung to long green belts behind their backs. They draw a shirt of iron mail over their vests, and wear a hood of similar material over their heads. A complete suit of mail is, however, a great rarity, and is considered an article of great luxury among the wealthier class; the majority being content with a piece of mail sufficient to cover the bosom, or else merely as a protection to the head. The female, who is obliged to furnish the male with almost every article of clothing, has to supply him even with his boots and mail. A small round shield, which they use when fighting at close quarters, hangs down from the saddle; three or four skins of thick leather are drawn over it, and an iron ring runs round the edge. An iron button or buckle is fixed in the centre; and betwixt this and the edge, a number of concentric rings are nailed down. The whole weight of the shield is from fifteen to twenty pounds. A plate of metal, with a very narrow slit, is fixed on to the gun as a sight. They make their own powder with the sulphur and saltpetre, which their own mountains afford; and have so ample a supply of lead, that their bullets are all made of that metal, unlike the Lesghis, whose balls are exclusively of iron.

ON THE CUSTOM OF WEARING RINGS.

II. EAR-RINGS, &c.

1. THE practice of wearing rings from the lower parts of the ear is likewise to be referred for its origin to the days of antiquity. It is still common, in most parts of the world, to bear about these pendent ornaments; but, westward as we go, the custom belongs more to the female sex than to the other, and, in our own country, entirely so.

That the wearing of rings and jewels in the ears, by way of ornament, took its rise in the eastern parts of the world, seems probable, by considering that the ornaments worn by the Jewish women were, in progress of time, very numerous. The prophet Isaiah, when reproaching the daughters of Sion with their luxury and vanity, (chap. iii., 16—24,) gives us a particular account of their ornaments, which, with their idolatry, were most probably derived from their heathen neighbours, among whom they had settled. That this was the case, seems extremely credible by reference to several parts of Scripture, where we read that the spoil of *ear-rings*, &c. was dedicated to the Lord.

This trinket seems to have been worn in those days as well by men as by women. It should seem that this ornament had been heretofore used for idolatrous purposes; since Jacob, in the injunction which he gave to his household, commanded them to put away "the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their *ear-rings*, which were in their ears." (Gen. xxxv. 4.) These ear-rings, or jewels, worn by Jacob's household, had probably been consecrated to superstitious purposes, and worn as a sort of amulet: for we learn that rings, whether on the ears or nose, were first superstitiously worn in honour of false gods, and probably of the sun, whose circular form they might be designed to represent. Rings and vessels, among the heathens, had oftentimes the image of the sun, moon, &c. engraved on them. The prophet Hosea speaks of the women of Jerusalem as indulging themselves

in the lying vanities of ear-rings devoted to the idol deities.

The ladies of ancient Rome used ear-rings of pearls and of precious stones. They had sometimes three or four to each ear; and they were of immense value. The Moors of Africa were also noted for the use of these ornaments.

Many of the busts of the heathen gods have been found to have ear-rings, or holes pierced in the ears for that purpose. Some investigators of antiquity have considered this to be characteristic of the busts of divinities; but this opinion does not appear to be well-founded, as there are many well-known statues of mortals which have the ears pierced. The fine bust of Caracalla, in the Villa Borghese, which is affixed to a statue of Hercules, has only the *right* ear pierced.

2. Jewels or rings for the nose seem more peculiarly eastern throughout all the ages of the world, than rings for the hands or the ears. These rings, as used by the Jewish women, were set with jewels, and hung from the nostrils, like ear-rings from the ears, by holes bored to receive them. These ornaments, from the allusions made to them in different parts of Scripture, seem not to have been uncommon throughout the various ages of the Jewish state and nation. However singular this custom may appear to us, modern travellers attest its prevalence in the East, among women of all ranks. In the East Indies, a small jewel, in form resembling a rose, adorns one nostril of even the poorest Malabar woman.

3. Among the Eastern nations, rings for the feet, called "tinkling ornaments" *about the feet*, by the prophet Isaiah, (chap. iii., 18,) were anciently in general use, as they are likewise in modern times. The East Indian women who accompanied the Indo-Anglican army from India to Egypt, some years ago, wore not only large rings in their noses, but silver rings about their ankles and wrists; their faces being painted above the eye-brows. In Persia and Arabia also, it is well known that the women paint their faces, and wear gold and silver rings about their ankles, which rings are full of little bells that tinkle, as they walk or trip along. Cingalese children of ten, wear rings about their ankles; Malabar and Moorish children wear rings, hung about with hollow balls which tinkle as they run.

WHEN on the fragrant sandal tree
The woodman's axe descends,
And she who bloomed so beauteously
Beneath the keen stroke bends,
E'en on the edge that wrought her death,
Dying she breathes her sweetest breath,
As if betokening in her fall
Peace to her foes, and love to all.
How hardly man this lessons learns,
To smile, and bless the hand that spurns;
To see the blow, to feel the pain,
But render only love again.
This spirit not to earth is given;
One had it—but He came from Heaven.
Reviled, rejected, and betrayed,
No curse He breathed, no plaint He made;
But when in death's deep pang He sighed,
Prayed for His murderers, and died.—EDMESTON.

To make a man virtuous, three things are necessary: 1st. natural parts and disposition; 2nd. precepts and instruction; 3rd. use and practice, which is able better to correct the first, and improve the latter.—LOCKE.

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